



# CREATING COMMERCIALS THAT SELL

*By Margo J. Hackel*

**D**irect response may not enjoy the same creative freedom as traditional advertising, but there is an art to producing television that sells. The precision that goes into crafting an effective offer, the knowledge of what consumers respond to, the ability to maintain viewer interest and the talent to balance product credibility and salability are all skills unique to the field of DRTV production.

But production is more than just writing a script, rolling the camera and editing out the bad parts. Production is a process whose beginnings may precede the product's and whose end may come months after the initial airing. For some clients whose DRTV experience has been extraordinary the production process is an ongoing one with no end in sight.

## Starting at the beginning

For this to be the case, the very first time a client sits down with an agency, production company, writer or director to develop and create a DRTV show or spot, everyone involved in the project must begin with just one thing in mind: the product.

Because the ultimate goal of DRTV is selling that product, either via immediate telephone orders or future retail transactions, everything about the production—from creative concept, scripting and pacing to casting, lighting and even editing—depends on the product itself.

The product's target audience, established brand image (if one already exists) and price point all must be taken into consideration when planning a DRTV project.

In production on the new NordicTrack infomercial: Script to Screen wanted to stress the company's unique customer service. "The whole story was conveyed from the perspective of one of NordicTracks's telemarketers."

— Barbara Kerry, president, Script to Screen Productions

**From Concept to Creative, Pre-Production to Post-Production, DRTV Demands Product Knowledge, Unique Creative Talents and Solid technical Skill**

These elements determine the tone of the show or spot. They even determine which length is called for: 30 minutes (a long-form show) or one to two minutes (a short-form spot).

If it is going to be an infomercial, the product and its features determine which of several popular formats will be used to convey the message: documercial, storymercial, demonstration show or possibly a hybrid of these or other possibilities.

If it is going to be a short-form spot, the product and its features also determine what that spot is going to say, who is going to say it and how it will be said.



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